FEDERAL AID IN SPORT FISH RESTORATION

Volume 2, Number 13

Region I Support Staff

by

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F-26-R

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RESEARCH PROJECT SEGMENT

State: Alaska

Name: Southeast Sport Fisheries Enhancement

Project: F-26-R

Study: E-1

Study Title: Region I Support Staff

Cooperator: Harold Heinkel

Period Covered: 1 October 1986 to 30 June 1987

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project is to provide the management and technical resources necessary to implement an expanded scope of Federal Aid in sport fish restoration (D-J) work in southeastern Alaska on schedule, within budget, and consistent with plans agreed upon by cooperating agencies. Jointly funded state and federal projects include (1) fish stocking to meet identified needs of recreational anglers, (2) research to determine the methods and means to efficiently meet these needs, and (3) management and technical support. Management and technical support are especially critical for initiating and implementing current projects as well as for preparing to implement suitable projects in the immediate future.

INTRODUCTION

One duty of the Division of Fisheries Rehabilitation, Enhancement and Development (FRED), as given in the Alaska Statutes Title 16, follows: "through rehabilitation, enhancement and development programs do all things necessary to ensure perpetual and increasing production and use of the food resources of Alaska waters and continental shelf areas." In the southeastern region, the

disciplines of biology, fish culture, maintenance, project management, biometrics, engineering, and administrative support are required to initiate FRED's large-scale and technical fish-husbandry and research projects during the current year.

OBJECTIVES

1. Establish production schedules for sport fisheries enhancement projects for the current and subsequent fiscal years; ensure that appropriate brood stocks are screened and selected; expedite coordination between fish production facilities and project biologists; and participate actively in planning committees to establish needs of recreational anglers.

2. Coordinate stocking plans and new stocking requests to ensure orderly and timely project implementation; solicit and review new project proposals; and develop strategies for new fisheries enhancement projects.

3. Ensure that stocking and evaluation plans achieve stated objectives; ensure that operational plans are adequate to accomplish the technical requirements; and observe and critique project field activities.

4. Supervise and direct completion of project reports and edit and finalize them for review at headquarters.

5. Ensure that the fish released for enhancement are of the highest quality; establish standards of quality; review historic data; and review current literature.

6. Provide biometric services to ensure that numbers of tagged fish are adequate to provide statistical significance at

levels of probability chosen and provide data-management services to projects.

7. Provide maintenance and engineering services required for projects; routinely interact with hatchery and other project personnel to ensure construction meets project needs and applicable codes are met; and provide expertise and manpower not otherwise available.

8. Install and maintain an adequate financial management system and monitor and review project records and costs for conformance with project agreement.

RESULTS

Planning

Personnel participated in public planning sessions at Juneau and Ketchikan, and the recreational needs and candidate strategies to meet those plans were identified. Critical review of drafts of the Ketchikan and Juneau plans was provided to the Sport Fish Division. Recreational fishery draft plans are now in place for the Ketchikan and Juneau management areas of southeastern Alaska.

An operational plan to implement a steelhead trout enhancement project to benefit Sitka anglers was proposed and approved by the appropriate department personnel. A plan to permit the continued culture of steelhead trout at the Klawock Hatchery was formulated and implemented. This action was needed because of the sockeye salmon stocking program initiated at Klawock Lake and the resulting conflict with steelhead trout culture at the hatchery as well as the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's fish-disease policies.

Sport fish restoration plans for 1 July 1987 through 30 June 1988 were submitted to headquarters. Intensive project prioritization sessions were conducted with Sport Fish Division personnel to establish the projects that will be conducted during the coming year. The Ketchikan Sport Fish Development Plan was amended to reflect budget restrictions and subsequent reductions. In response to needs expressed in the Ketchikan public recreational planning sessions, a proposal for enhancement of summer coho salmon in the Ketchikan area was made.

Project Development and Implementation

A summer coho salmon stock was identified and obtained for culture at the Deer Mountain Hatchery in Ketchikan. A source of steelhead trout for initiation of the Sitka steelhead trout enhancement project was secured and egg takes initiated; state funds were identified to accomplish this. A proposal for stocking steelhead trout smolts produced at the Klawock Hatchery was composed for subsequent presentation to Sport Fish Division personnel for review. The Klawock project biologist and hatchery staff provided technical and logistical support for planting steelhead smolts into Montana Creek in Juneau.

Quality Control

Transport of juvenile fish for planting at enhancement sites remote from the production hatchery was accomplished successfully. An unacceptable loss of chinook salmon during the first transport to Auke Creek was corrected through a change in transport methods. Research design plans and operations were conducted in a manner consistent with planned objectives.

Reporting

Quarterly reports were obtained from all projects. Final reports were edited and forwarded to headquarters.

Fish Quality

Pathological clearance was obtained for all juvenile fish released. Observations documenting morphological characteristics were recorded for all lots of fish released[1]. Average lengths and average weights of tag-release groups to the Pacific Marine Fisheries Commission were reported.

Biometric Services

Tagging plans were formulated with project personnel to ensure that research results would be statistically significant at the level of probability chosen. Research personnel were provided consultation services for analysis and presentation of data. Hatchery production and release information for juvenile fish was incorporated into the regional database. Consultation was provided to Sport Fish Division personnel concerning recreational creel sampling.

Maintenance and Engineering

Personnel assisted hatchery-production personnel in selecting equipment for feeding juvenile salmon at Deer Mountain and in installing feeders. Interior lighting over the rearing containers at Deer Mountain Hatchery was rewired. Engineering consultation was provided to the hatchery staff at Snettisham Hatchery concerning gas saturation, and it was also provided to Klawock Hatchery personnel concerning the isolation rearing of steelhead trout at that facility. Maintenance help was provided at the Klawock Hatchery to incorporate a separate water supply for steelhead trout incubation and rearing. Consulting services concerning steelhead trout were provided for the Crystal Lake Hatchery operations. Aid was provided to Juneau Recreational

[1] Methods established by Ron Goede, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, were used.

Fisheries project personnel during selection, purchase, and modification of fish-transport equipment. Engineering consulting services were provided to Sport Fish Division personnel concerning a possible smolt imprint/release pond for the Mendenhall River and a boat-launch site at Wrangell, Alaska.

Administration

All personnel and purchasing records for the year were processed. Procedures for processing federal project documents were learned and incorporated into operations. Purchasing was monitored for conformance with work plans and the project agreement.

DISCUSSION

This project was very beneficial because the work accomplished will provide significant benefits to recreational anglers in southeastern Alaska and project personnel have profited from the incorporation of the new projects into their work schedule. The cooperation and coordination with Division of Sport Fish personnel benefited all involved.

This project period was shortened to 9 months in order to have the D-J contract period coincide with the state's fiscal year. The benefits anticipated in the future outweigh the administrative difficulties encountered with the current 9-month project. Considerable help was provided to project personnel by Chris Dlugokenski, D-J coordinator of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Anchorage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Cooperative planning and joint project prioritization with Division of Sport Fish occur prior to 15 September in the year preceding project work.

2. A project to determine the characteristics of steelhead trout smolts that can produce a satisfactory adult return should be implemented at the earliest possible date.

3. Schedules for formal public involvement to determine the perceived needs of recreational anglers should be increased.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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